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2010

'Celebrating The Tradition'

FAMILY ACTIVITY BOOK



USDA FOREST SERVICE

CHRISTMAS TREE PROGRAM

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION



'Celebrating The Tradition'




FAMILY ACTIVITY BOOK

Welcome to your National Forests, public lands where you can cut your own Christmas tree. We hope your time today will be enjoyable and memorable for your whole family. In cutting your own Christmas tree you are also helping the Forest Service manage the forest by removing smaller trees that may otherwise intensify wildfires and thinning out trees so the ones remaining can grow to be big, strong and healthy, which in turn will strengthen the forest ecosystem and provide a home to more species of wildlife and a greater diversity of plants.

Check list-what you will need before you go...

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tire chains | <input type="checkbox"/> Food | <input type="checkbox"/> First-aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Ropes | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand saw | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra water | <input type="checkbox"/> Warm drinks | <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel | <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket | <input type="checkbox"/> Full tank of gas | |

Rules for cutting your tree.

-  Select a tree 6 inches or less in diameter so you don't cut a tree that's too large.
-  Cut tree 6 inches (or less) from the ground.
-  Take the whole tree with you. You will find that you can use every part of the tree to decorate your home and you will be doing the forest a favor by removing limbs and needles that may spark or intensify a forest fire.

Tips on caring for your tree at home.

Recut the end of the tree by 1 inch and let it stand in a bucket of fireproofing mixture until you're ready to bring it indoors.

Fireproofing mixture recipe

2 gals. of hot water
2 cups Karo syrup
2 oz. liquid Clorox bleach
2 pinches epsom salts
1/2 tsp. boraxo
1 tsp. chelated iron (garden shop)
Fill the reservoir TWICE a day (morning and evening) with the remaining mixture.

How does this fireproofing work?

The karo syrup provides sugar, which allows the tree to soak up enormous amounts of water. Without the sugar, only a small amount of water is absorbed. You can expect the tree to soak up 1½ gallons of the recipe during the 10- to 14-day period your tree is up. This is approximately 800% more water than it would have absorbed growing in the forest.

The boron (in the borax) makes the water and sugar move to every needle of your tree. The epsom salts and chelated iron provide magnesium sulfate that facilitates the process of chlorophyll production, keeping your needles green. Clorox bleach stops mold from forming when water and sugar stand for a period of time.

9 Ways to Recycle a Christmas Tree

As a conservation leader, the Forest Service supports and encourages recycling as a means of sustaining our natural resources. Here are some ways you may consider when recycling your Christmas tree.



Put it in your backyard, stale cookies, popcorn balls, cranberry strings and all. The birds will love you for it, especially if you beef up the pickings by adding a few suet balls. Tie the tree firmly to a fence first.



Use the green branches for winter window sill arrangements and add dried berries or seed pods to brighten empty window boxes.



Clip the branch tips and dry them for use in sachets or potpourri.



Wire the wide branches over trellis vines to protect them from drying winds.



Use the largest branches as mulch over perennial flower beds.



Chop the larger branches into spring mulch for acid-loving plants.



Spread the branches and use them as a loose carpet for garden paths.



Dry the trunk and use it for firewood or garden stakes.



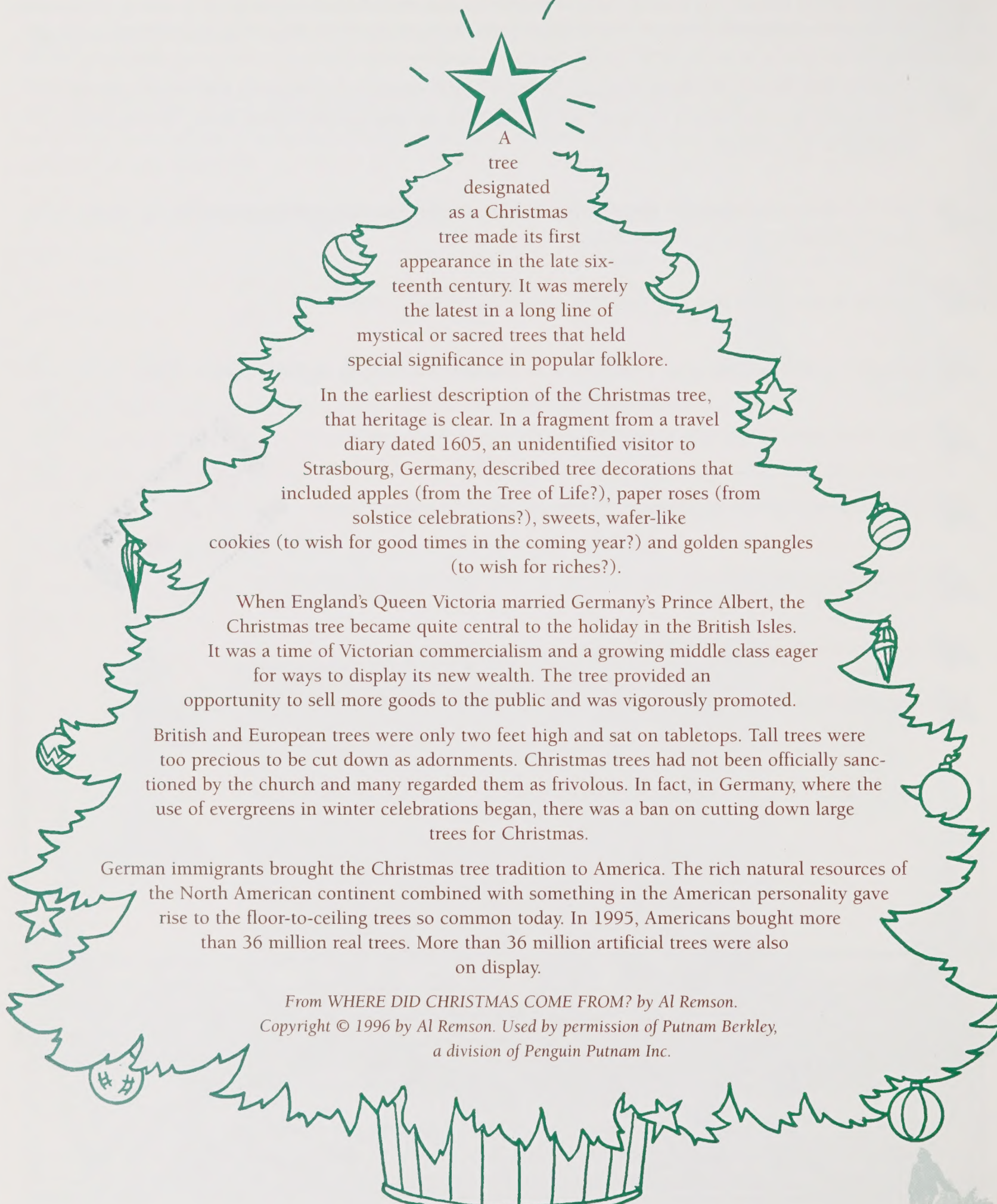
Take the tree to a recycling center. Most cities sponsor dropoff sites or free pickup.

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Where Did Christmas Trees Come From?

Oh, Christmas Tree...



A tree designated as a Christmas tree made its first appearance in the late sixteenth century. It was merely the latest in a long line of mystical or sacred trees that held special significance in popular folklore.

In the earliest description of the Christmas tree, that heritage is clear. In a fragment from a travel diary dated 1605, an unidentified visitor to Strasbourg, Germany, described tree decorations that included apples (from the Tree of Life?), paper roses (from solstice celebrations?), sweets, wafer-like cookies (to wish for good times in the coming year?) and golden spangles (to wish for riches?).

When England's Queen Victoria married Germany's Prince Albert, the Christmas tree became quite central to the holiday in the British Isles. It was a time of Victorian commercialism and a growing middle class eager for ways to display its new wealth. The tree provided an opportunity to sell more goods to the public and was vigorously promoted.

British and European trees were only two feet high and sat on tabletops. Tall trees were too precious to be cut down as adornments. Christmas trees had not been officially sanctioned by the church and many regarded them as frivolous. In fact, in Germany, where the use of evergreens in winter celebrations began, there was a ban on cutting down large trees for Christmas.

German immigrants brought the Christmas tree tradition to America. The rich natural resources of the North American continent combined with something in the American personality gave rise to the floor-to-ceiling trees so common today. In 1995, Americans bought more than 36 million real trees. More than 36 million artificial trees were also on display.

*From WHERE DID CHRISTMAS COME FROM? by Al Remson.
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a division of Penguin Putnam Inc.*

Why We Cut Christmas Trees on National Forests

Use the clues to unscramble the letters

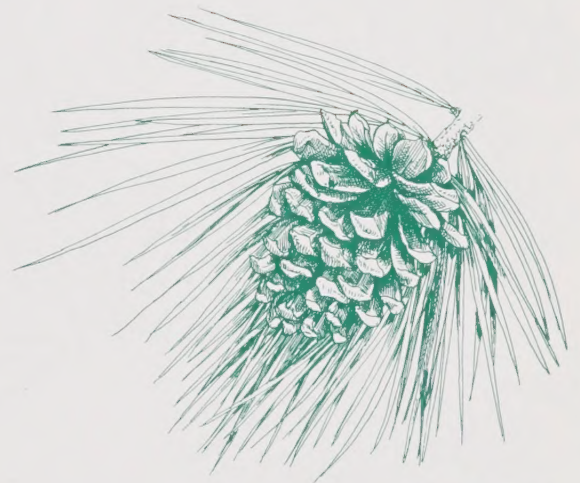
1. Cutting trees opens up the canopy and allows sunlight to reach the soil. This enables more plants to grow, which improves _____ for wildlife by providing more food for them to eat.
a t i b h t a
2. Cutting trees reduces _____, lessening the threat and severity of wildfires. u l e f s
3. Opening up the canopy to let more sunshine in promotes _____.
g a e e n e r t r i n o
4. By reducing the number of trees in an area, you reduce competition and help improve the _____ of the trees. i v o g r
5. More types of plants growing in the forest and different ages of the trees makes the forest more diverse and _____. e l a t h h y
6. It's a special holiday _____ experience for the family to enjoy.
c t i e e r a o a n r l

1. ((habitat) 2. (fuels) 3. (regeneration) 4. (vigor) 5. (healthy) 6. (recreational)

Tree Identification



Douglas-fir



Ponderosa pine



Lodgepole pine



Subalpine fir



Who Lives Here?

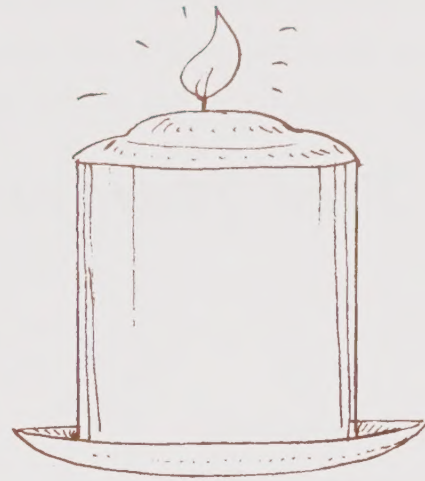
cottontail rabbit
trout
Abert's squirrel
eagle

turkey
people
ground squirrel
coyote

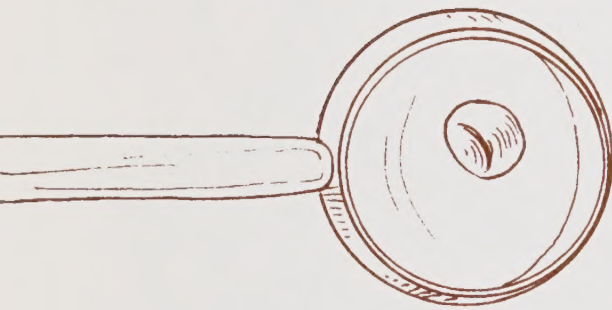
nuthatch
red fox
black bear
bobcat

deer
mountain lion
elk
goose

What Do Pine Cones and Candles Have in Common?



Pollen



Pine cones are wind pollinated

Wind blows the pollen from the male cones and pollinates the female cone. It takes an average of two years for a female cone to mature after being pollinated.



Male cones



Female cones



Beeswax is a result of bee pollination

Bees transfer pollen from one plant to another while looking for nectar. After the bee has enough food, it goes back to its hive and produces honey and honeycomb (beeswax) from the nectar.



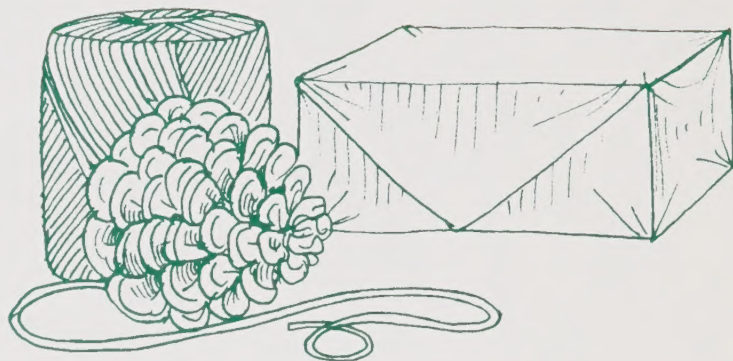
Craft Activities

When you are at the cutting area, try finding pine cones, evergreen sprigs, rosehips and oak leaves. Once you get home, here are some crafts you can make and give as gifts (check with your local craft store and/or health food store for some of the listed items).

Pine Cone Fire Starters

pine cones (any type)
paraffin wax
string

Place wax in a double boiler and melt.
Tie a string to each pinecone. Dip cone into wax. Let wax dry. Store in a dry place.



Christmas Potpourri

4 cups partially dried deep-red rose petals
1 1/4 cups coarse salt
20 small pine cones
4 tbs. dried juniper berries, lightly crushed
2 tbs. fresh or dried mint
2 tbs. ground cinnamon
3 drops pine oil
2 drops rose oil

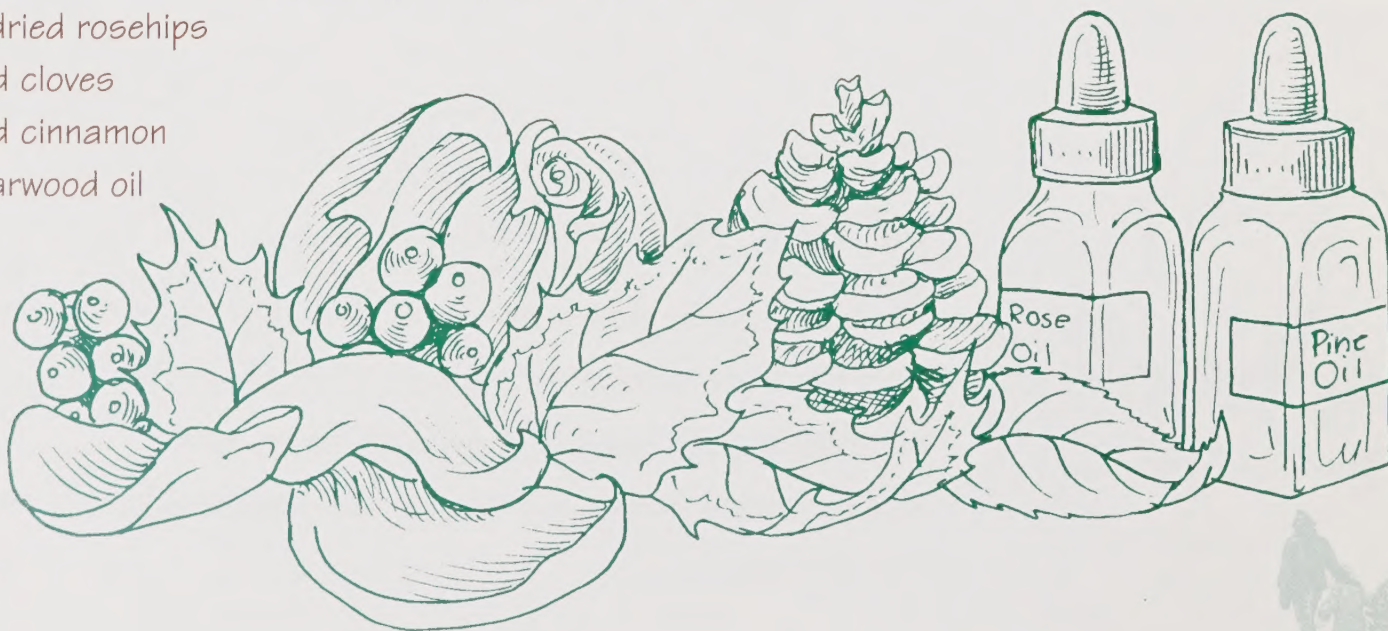


Seal in a jar and shake every day for 8 weeks to blend the fragrance.

Woody Seed Potpourri

Combine the following ingredients to make 10 cups of mixture:

10 cups of small pine cones, fragrant pine sprigs, star anise, cinnamon sticks, nutmeg, dried rosehips
2 tbs. ground cloves
2 tbs. ground cinnamon
4 drops cedarwood oil



Yule Log

1 large log (12"-15" long)

evergreen branches

pine cones

cinnamon sticks

fresh rosemary branches (optional)

Cut hole notches in log for 2 tapered candles.

Secure candles with glue. Arrange evergreen branches on log and secure using glue gun.

Add pine cones, fresh rosemary branches, holly or any other favorite decoration.



Wreath Building

1 grapevine wreath

evergreen branches

ribbon

floral wire

cones, berries, bells, etc.

Weave evergreen branches into grapevine wreath and secure, using wire. Decorate with ribbon, cones, berries, bells or whatever you like.

Kiss of Love or Kiss of Death

Kissing under the mistletoe is as much a part of our traditional Christmas celebration as the Christmas tree itself. But where did the custom come from? It first started in pagan times. Druids in England hung mistletoe over their doorways, believing it would bring them blessings of health and good fortune in the coming year. It was also believed to bring peace. The Scandinavians added the kissing, believing that the goddess of love and beauty kissed all who stood under it.

Mistletoe is celebrated as a mystic plant because it grows without soil and remains green year round. The broadleaf mistletoe, generally associated with Christmas, also grows and blooms in winter.

Scientists have discovered that mistletoe is a parasite living off another plant. Broadleaf mistletoe grows on oak and other deciduous trees and dwarf mistletoe grows on evergreens. As a parasite, it weakens the tree, making the tree more susceptible to attacks from insects and diseases and sometimes, killing the tree. It can also cause deformation such as the "witches broom."

In managing for the health of the forest, the Forest Service determines how infected an area is. Minor infection can create positive benefits by bringing more insects to the area, creating more food for certain birds and other wildlife. The weakened/dead trees become homes and roosting sites for woodpeckers and raptors such as eagles. If the infection is major, the only way to eliminate the mistletoe is to remove all of the infected trees by a clearcut. Wildfires have also been found to be an effective way to remove the host trees and the mistletoe. Whether fire or a clearcut are used to remove infected trees, it only takes a few short years before a new group of baby trees can be seen. The diversity in the size and age classes of the trees helps to maintain and enhance the health of the forest.

Dwarf mistletoe

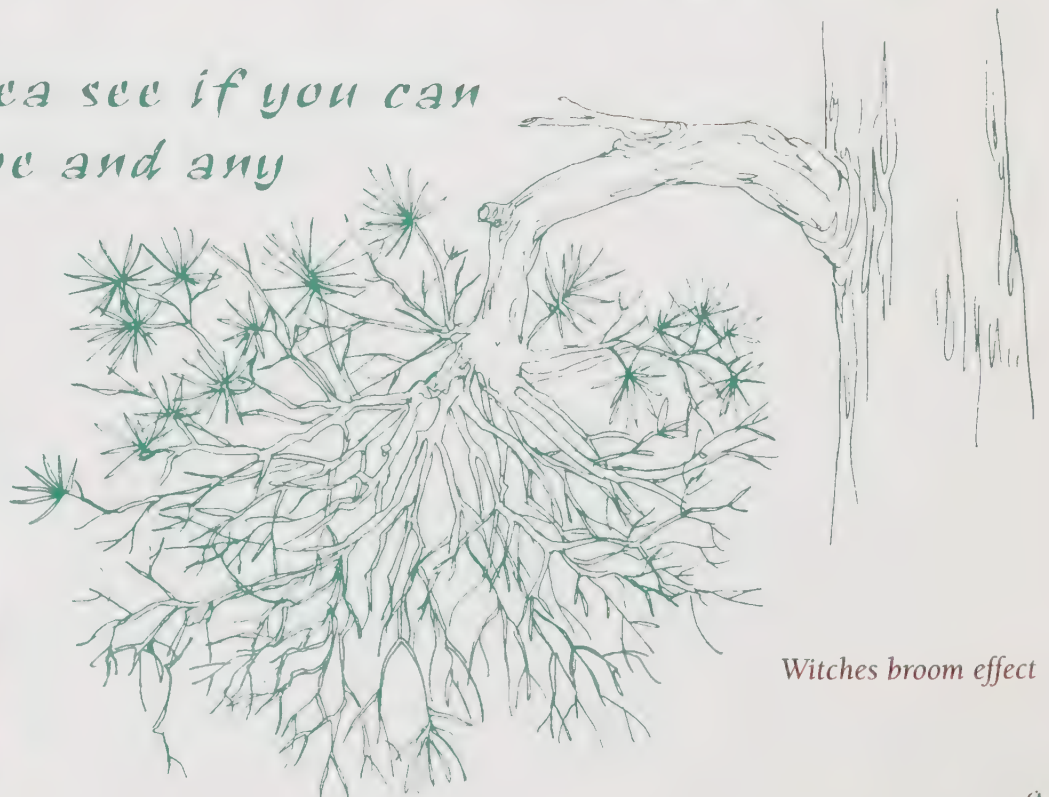


Broadleaf mistletoe

Look around the area see if you can find dwarf mistletoe and any "witches brooms."

Safety Tip:

the leafy mistletoe are poisonous










Witches broom effect

Christmas Tree Cutting Area Game

Rules: Each player uses a coin for a marker. Another coin is used for tossing. If it's heads, move your marker forward 2 spaces. If it's tails, move your marker forward 1 space. If your marker lands on a space with instructions, do what the instructions tell you. Start at the ranger station. The first person to the Christmas tree cutting area wins.



Start Here

Car parked properly w/emergency brake on.			You spot a deer. Go forward 2 spaces.		Smokey's Den 		You feed the chipmunks and the deer. Woodsy says go back 3 spaces.
Smokey says go forward 1 space.					You brought sunscreen and a first aid kit. Go forward 1 space.		
	You trip because your boots aren't tied. Go back 3 spaces.	You have a full tank of gas. Go straight to Woodsy's Nest.	You throw your burning cigarette on the ground. Smokey says pick it up and go back to the car. 			You wander off the trail. Go back 4 spaces.	
Oops! You forgot your saw. Go back 3 spaces.						You pick up all your trash from your picnic. Go forward 5 spaces.	You carve your name into a tree. Go back 9 spaces.
	Chains you brought don't fit your car. Go back to the ranger station.						
			You pick up litter on the trail. Woodsy says go forward 3 spaces.			You see an elk, but keep your distance. Go forward 2 spaces.	
You carry food and water in your backpack. Go forward 5 spaces.		Woodsy says go forward 4 spaces. 		You see a gray jay and don't feed it! Go forward 2 spaces.			
	You drop your mittens. Santa says go back 5 spaces.		 Woodsy's Nest			You glimpse a snowshoe hare. Go forward 2 spaces.	
You brought chains for your tires. Go forward 3 spaces.		You see a burning cigarette and stamp it out. Go to Smokey's Den.					

Tree Cutting Area



The Role of Fire in Keeping the Forest Healthy

Fire is nature's way of recycling. It's a rebirth process that changes the character of the forest.

The periodic nature of fire provides a mosaic – or mix – of forest plants, ages and sizes of trees, cover and forage, providing for a broader range of wildlife, increased resistance to insects and diseases and natural plant succession.

Fire is a major force of nature, just like hurricanes, floods and earthquakes.







Fire Prevention

Although naturally occurring wildfires are beneficial to the overall health and vigor of the forest, human-caused wildfires still need to be prevented in order to preserve human life, protect human property and prevent undue resource damage.

*That is why Smokey says,
“only _____”*

you can prevent forest fires

Remember your ABCD's

-  Always be careful with fire in the forest
-  Burn trash only on calm days
-  Campfires should always be put dead out
-  Drown your campfires with water



Don't

What's wrong
with this
picture?



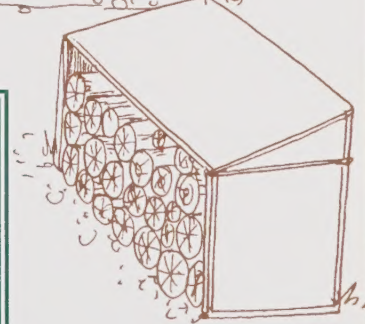
Do

What's right with this picture?



If you live in or near the forest, make sure your home has defensible space

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ■ Use fire-resistant building material | ■ Install a spark arrester |
| ■ Clean your roof | ■ Control vegetation |
| ■ Keep your chimney clean | ■ Develop a water supply |
| ■ Store firewood away from your home | ■ Plan adequate access and escape |
| ■ Use only approved woodburning devices | ■ Have fire tools handy |



From the Forest Service Family to Yours Forest Service Employees' Favorite Family Recipes

S'mores

Mike daLuz, Division Chief of Fire Operations and Ecology,
Regional Office, Golden, Colorado

- 2 graham crackers
- 1 piece of chocolate
- 1 marshmallow

Roast marshmallow over an open fire. Sandwich between chocolate and crackers.

*"Enjoy with a cup of hot chocolate,
tell stories and share memories.
Make sure your open fire is dead out."*

*"My sister gave me this
recipe one cold winter's day
in Chicago. I always think of
her when I make it. It's a
warm memory on a cold day."*

BBQ Pot Roast

Linda Hecker, Regional
Interpretive Services Coordinator,
Regional Office, Golden, Colorado

- 3 lbs. pot roast
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 3 med.-sized sliced onions
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1/4 cup vinegar

- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 2 tbs. brown sugar
- 1 tbs. worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 tsp. dry mustard
- 1/4 tsp. paprika

Pour mixture over meat and simmer in a Dutch oven or crock pot for approx. 6 hrs. on very low heat.

Aunt Patsy's Sugar Cookies

Mandy Hanifen, Visitor Information Specialist,
Sulphur Ranger District, Granby Colorado

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 2/3 cup shortening | 4 tsp. milk |
| 3/4 cup sugar | 2 cups sifted flour |
| 1 tsp. vanilla | 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder |
| 1 egg | 1/4 tsp. salt |

Thoroughly cream shortening, sugar and vanilla. Add egg, beat til light and fluffy. Stir in milk. Stir together dry ingredients, blend into cream mixture. Divided dough in half. Chill 1 hour. On lightly floured surface, roll to 1/8 inch thickness. Cut into shapes. Bake on greased cookie sheet at 375 about 6-8 minutes. Makes 2 dozen.

*"We used this recipe for the
cookies we set out for Old
St. Nick on Christmas Eve.
Every year, he ate them all!"*

"A Christmas favorite my family enjoyed at home in Pennsylvania."



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An Elegant Spinach Salad

Liz Sporcich, Office Manager,
Pikes Peak Ranger District, Colorado Springs, Colorado

12 oz spinach	2 tbs. minced green onion
2 tbs. sesame seeds (toasted)	1 tsp. salt
1/4 cup safflower oil	dash pepper
2 tbs. balsamic vinegar	dash Tabasco sauce
1-2 tbs. sugar	1 pint sliced, fresh strawberries

Toast sesame seeds. Removing stems from spinach, place in a crystal serving bowl along with the strawberries and refrigerate. Shake oil, balsamic vinegar, sugar, onions, salt, pepper and Tabasco sauce in a small jar and refrigerate. Just before serving, add the dressing to the salad mix and toss. Serves 6

Fire Camp Coffee

David Steinke, Regional Audio Visual Specialist,
Regional Office, Golden, Colorado

Bring 125 gallons of water to a boil. Brew with 25 pounds of coffee.
Serves 1,000 at 5:30 a.m.

For individual enjoyment:

1 cup of Fire Camp Coffee
1/2 packet of instant hot chocolate

Stir, swish or slosh briskly together. Drink. Repeat.

"It's quick, easy, yummy and a great waker-upper."

"Brighten the corner where you are."

Angel Macaroons

Ranger Jane, Regional Customer Service Coordinator,
Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Golden, Colorado

1 pkg. Betty Crocker One-Step white angel food cake mix	1 pkg. (7 oz. or 2 cups) cookie coconut
1/2 cup water	1/4 tsp. salt
1 1/2 tsp. almond extract	

Heat oven to 350. Cover baking sheet with aluminum foil and grease lightly. Blend cake mix, water and almond extract with mixer at low speed for 1/2 minute. Beat 1 minute at medium speed. Fold in coconut. Drop mixture by scant teaspoonfuls about 3 inches apart onto foil. Bake 8-10 minutes or until set. Cool thoroughly before removing from foil. Makes 6 dozen.



How to contact us:

USDA Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Region
740 Simms St.
Golden, CO 80401
(303) 275-5350
TDD (303) 275-5367
or visit our website at:
www.fs.fed.us/r2



We would like to hear from you regarding this booklet and the Christmas tree recreation fee demonstration project. Please contact us or fill out a customer service comment card.



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